

## [Walter Hayes Ewing]

[5241 - LA?] DUP

### FORM A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE September 20, 1938 SUBJECT American folklore

1. Name and address of informant Walter Hayes Ewing, 1517 No. 29th
2. Date and time of interview Sept. 17, 1938 - 9:30 to 12 a.m. each day
3. Place of interview Home at 1517 North 19th
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant None
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you None
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc. Average dwelling house with furnishings of older style. Gives impression of being somewhat lifeless and somber. No inspiration much to be had. Atmosphere of past which is more or less dead. A typical home where the woman touch is lacking. You can almost feel the surroundings. Outside, ordinary residence of medium living conditions C15-[??]

### FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

DATE September 20, 1938 SUBJECT American Folklore

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NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Walter Hayes Ewing, 1517 North 19th

1. Ancestry English-Irish
2. Place and date of birth Stuart, Iowa - Nov. 7, 1876
3. Family (Father - John and Mary Ewing) 4 brothers - 4 sisters - (3 now dead)
4. Places lived in, with dates Stuart, Iowa - 1876 - 1885, Rutland, Ill. 1885, Creston, Iowa, 1888-1909, Lincoln, 1909 to date.
5. Education, with dates Grade school to eighth grade, 1883 to 1895
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Farm work - Labor - drove hearse for undertaker in Creston, Iowa, 1902 to 1905. Handling horses and stock from 1905 to 1920, Nebraska Uni. Ag. College, 1920 to 1925
7. special skills and interests Horses and stock - Liked this work and liked animals
8. Community and religious activities Christian Church - [Woddman?] Lodge
9. Description of informant Small of stature, and of no particular distination, a bachelor, stilted in speech, no magnetism, no imagination.
10. Other points gained in interview A type who is the victim of his own suppressions and inhibitions. This is probably to some extent inherent while the other extreme is manifested by other members of the family. Health is below average. Apparently has lived a somewhat secluded life.

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Harold J. Moss ADDRESS 6934 Francis St.

## Library of Congress

DATE September 20, 1938 SUBJECT American Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Walter Hayes Ewing, 1517 North 20th, City

"My mother was great to be singing songs and she always enjoyed this. Her best ones she wrote down. I remember one that she used to sing but she never had this written.

The name of it was 'Grumble'. It was about a man who always grumbled about his work and his wife got tired of this and told him, she could do more work in one day than he could in three days. So they traded jobs and she took the plow and he did the house work. But he still grumbled and complained and so the song went on and on about each thing he tried to do and found it was not better than any other.

THE CUMBERLAND CREW Come all you brave seamen and list to my ditty A story I'll sing of a battle so true Let every brave seamen list to this ditty. o'er the fate of that gallant Cumberland crew. On that ill fated day about 10 in the morning Oh clear was the sky and bright shone the sun Which told every brave seaman to stand by his gun. When the drums of the Cumberland sounded the warning. An ironclad frigate down on us came 'Twas high in the air the rubble (rebel) flag flew While the penant of treason was proudly [?]. Determined to conquer our Cumberland crew. Then up spoke our brave Captain without hesitation.

Now my boys of this monster, oh don't be afraid We've sworn to maintain our own loved constitution And die for our country we are not afraid. Yes, we'll die for our country for the cause it is glorious The stars and the stripes shall wave o'er the crew. We'll sink at our quarters or conquer victorious. 'twas answered with cheers by the Cumberland Crew. Yes, we fought them 3 hours without intermission 'twas fast and thick the Rebble Balls flew 'twas the blood of the [?] the sea it did crimson. 'twas the blood of that gallant Cumberland Crew. Yes we fought them three hours without intermission. They turned and full speed they bore down on us true They struck up midships, our planks they did sever, And in

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Virginia's dark waters sank the Cumberland Crew. Now all you brave seaman that list to this ditty Remember the fate of that poor gallant crew And whenever you strike then for freedom, Strike in revenge of the Cumberland Crew.

In winter, I get up at night And dress by yellow candle light. In summer, quite the other way. I have to go to bed by day. I have to go to bed and see The birds still hopping in the tree Or hear the grown-up people's feet Still going past me in the street. And does it not seem hard to you When all the sky is clear and blue And I should like so much to play To have to go to bed by day.

“ Hard Times ” as sung by Mrs. Mary Frances Ewing when a girl. Come listen awhile, I'll sing you a song Concerning hard times and it ain't very long. It's all about how, they do cheat and do bite They'll cheat one another and think they do right. Its hard times. From Father to Mother, from Sister to brother, From cousin to cousin, they'll cheat one another Since cheatings became so much in the fashion, I fear it will spread all over the nation. Its hard times. The baker he cheats in the Bread that we eat Likewise the Butcher in weighing up meat He'll tip up the bar and make [???] He'll swear it good weight, if it looks half a pound. and (its hard times). The Tailor cuts out to save all he can He'll cheat his own employer if he is a poor man He'll take the [bull?] and swear the [sack?] And away goes the poor man without a coat to his back. (it is hard times). And as for the lawyer, he is like to go free - He'll tell anything for the sake of his fee. And as for your case, he will swear your'e right. He'll get all your money then call you a bite 'it is hard times.[?]

As for the doctor, I like to forget, he is the worst cheat in all the whole flock. He'll swear he will cure you of all your distress (It is hard times) And now to go on and make an end of my song For fear you'll get wearie and think that I am long. We must prepare to go at his call if the Lord don't take part, the devil must all. It is hard times.

### Other Songs

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Cumberland Crew

The Blind Girl

The Banner Betsy Made

The Children

My father used to go down to the old Haymarket square here and he would bet the men there it would either rain or it wouldn't. He said if the ants worked in the morning it would rain before night. In Colorado this sign didn't work so good. He told us about a man who was surrounded by rattle snakes and he killed so many by [?] them that the poisonous fumes made him deathly sick. He turned green for a while. Cowboys always said if you would take your lasso rope and make a big ring of rope around your bed on the ground a rattlesnake would not cross the rope and so would not get to a sleeping person.

In Illinois there was some neighbors who feared witches and devils. They had a big farm and it was bordered by a river and some marshy ground. A [screwed?] trader lived near [?] and he wanted to buy their farm cheap. So he planned to give them a scare, knowing their fear of spirits and witches. At night he took lanterns and candles and went into this swamp, near their home, with sticks they would wave those lights back and forth and up and down.

The people seeing this strange movement of lights became scared and sold out for almost nothing. Husking Bees

[Husking?] bees were sometimes carried on by placing a jug of whiskey in the bottom of the pile of unshucked corn. This was supposed to cause [?] the shuckers to work faster, as they would get this whiskey as pay.

Sometimes they placed other things in the corn and oven red ears which when found entitled the one who found it to kiss one of the girls who were also there.

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What they wanted was to get their corn husked and it was turned into a sort of party affair.

[?] have some other old records but cannot find them now. Supplementary to Form C

The foregoing songs were sung by the informant's mother years ago. Also the stories were a part of their earlier life. Evidently the father was more socially inclined and was later separated from the family altho this was not mentioned. Long residents of this country they gained but little by it.

The mother, May Ewing, died in May 1938, age about [?] years. The community life then seemed to have a practical motif and something or other was accomplished in a natural way. The neighborly influence seems outstanding in all the early social and working day activities.